LEVEL news

Great Lakes - St. Lawrence River Water Levels

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May Rainfall Helps Water Level Conditions Improve on the Lower Lakes

Conditions on the Upper Lakes Remain Unchanged

May was a wet month over the lower Great Lakes with the Lake Erie and Lake Ontario basins receiving well above average rainfall. The additional water helped levels improve on both lakes relative to their long-term average conditions.

Water levels on Lake Erie rose 16 cm from the beginning to the end of May. Although this amount may not appear that large, it is about 11 cm more than the long-term average increase recorded on the lake for May. Although water levels on Lake Erie remain below average, they have moved closer to it.Levels on Lake Ontario rose 27 cm during May, about 18 cm more than average.

As a result, water levels on Lake Ontario moved from 15 cm below average at the beginning of May to 3 cm above average at the beginning of June. While most of the increase recorded on Lake Ontario during May was due to the above average rainfall received by the lake, about 4 of the 27 cm increase was the result of outflows slightly below those called for by the lake's regulation plan. These under-discharges were made in accordance with the International St. Lawrence River Board of Control's current outflow strategy to conserve water on Lake Ontario, for critical needs later in the year.

In contrast to the lower lakes, water level conditions on the upper lakes did not improve relative to their average conditions during May. Since lakes Superior and Michigan-Huron received rainfall amounts closer to average during May, their water levels increased just slightly more than average during the month. As a result, water levels on the upper lakes began June about as far below average as they were at the beginning of May.

Great Lakes Water Level Information

	May Monthly Mean Level		Beginning of June Level	
Lake	Compared to Monthly Average (1918-2002)	Compared to One Year Ago	Compared to Beginning-of-Month Average (1918-2002)	Compared to One Year Ago

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Water Levels for the Great Lakes and Montreal Harbour *a monthly bulletin from Canadian Hydrographic Service*

About the monthly Water Level bulletin

May Precipitation Over the Great Lakes

As a percentage of the long-term May average:

Great Lakes Basin	131%
Lake Erie (including Lake St. Clair)	163%
Lake Superior	111%
Lakes Michigan-	122%

Superior	20 cm below	8 cm below	19 cm below	4 cm below
Michigan-Huron	60 cm below	27 cm below	59 cm below	28 cm below
St. Clair	31 cm below	21 cm below	23 cm below	14 cm below
Erie	21 cm below	21 cm below	16 cm below	18 cm below
Ontario	6 cm below	27 cm below	3 cm below	24 cm below

Huron

Lake Ontario 160%

Note: These figures are preliminary.

May Outflows From the Great Lakes

As a percentage of the long-term May average:

Lake Superior 94%

Lake Erie 92%

Lake Huron 82%

Lake Ontario 85%

Note: These figures are preliminary.

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Summary information for "LEVEL*news*"

IJC Assists in Hydro-power Emergency

When the Silver Lake Dam failed on the Dead River near Marquette, Michigan, flood and safety concerns were paramount. The dam failure also had other consequences, one of which was a sudden drop in hydropower production. In other parts of the Upper Peninsula, business operations were forced to shut down due to lack of electric power.

Responding to this situation, the IJC and its International Lake Superior Board of Control authorized increased outflows from Lake Superior to contribute additional hydropower to the Upper Peninsula power grid. The increased outflows are expected to continue into June. Allowing slightly increased outflows from Lake Superior for a short time has minimal impacts on water levels and flows in the Great Lakes and the St. Marys River while helping offset an electrical system emergency. The Superior Board continues to watch the situation closely.

Open House on June 24th

The International Lake Superior Board of Control will hold an open house on the subject of Lake Superior outflow regulation, and water levels in the St. Marys River and on the Great Lakes. The open house will be held on Tuesday, June 24th, from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., in the Russ Ramsay Board Room (Level 3) of the Civic Centre at 99 Foster Drive in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario.

Open House Scheduled for September 15th

15th The International Niagara Board of Control will hold an open house during the evening of Monday, September 15th, at the Old Stone Inn, 5425 Robinson Street in Niagara Falls, Ontario.

The purpose of this open house is to inform the public of the Board's current activities and to hear public comments and suggestions regarding the Board's work. In addition, information will be presented on Great Lakes water levels. The open house is scheduled to begin at 7:30 p.m. If you need additional information, please contact Len Falkiner at: (905) 336-4947.

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